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Report on the Boria or Lakha Medi Stúpa near Junagadh.—By HENRY COUSENS, M. R. A. S., *Archæological Surveyor of Western India.*

(*With a Plate.*)

On the 27th of January, 1889, I received a demi-official from the Director-General, Archæological Survey, enclosing a cutting from the *Morning Post* in which was given a short account of the opening of a *stúpa* near Junagadh, Kathiawad, by Mr. J. M. Campbell, C. S., directing me to take immediate steps to ascertain what was being done. On the same day I wrote to Rao Bahadur Haridas Viharidas, Divan of Junagadh, and in reply was told that Mr. Campbell had, during the Christmas holidays, commenced the excavation of the *stúpa* in question, and had left instructions with them for its continuance. I then wrote to Mr. Campbell (letter No. 12 of 31st January 1889) asking him what had been done, and what was still doing, and received from him a statement of all that had been done up to that time. In his note accompanying it, he said that, should anything be found, he would be immediately informed, and would try to return to Junagadh for a few days. On the night of the 15th instant, I received a telegram from the Assistant Divan of Junagadh from which I understood that a 'find' had been made. The Assistant Divan, Mr. Ardesir, wrote me at the same time, but the letter did not reach me then, as I started early next day. At Dhola Junction I met Mr. Campbell, and we went together to Junagadh. The next morning we went out to the *stúpa*. But before describing the 'find,' I will try and describe the position and surrounding of the *stúpa*.

At the foot of the southern slopes of Girnar whose precipitous cliffs rise a short distance to the east of Junagadh, is a small secluded valley—an amphitheatre among the hills—almost entirely surrounded by the latter. It is about six miles from Junagadh, and the only path to it leads for some distance along the course of the river, past the celebrated Aśoka Rock, and crossing an intervening spur, debouches at once into it. It is thickly wooded, and the bush and scrub, with a good sprinkling of larger trees, climb the hill sides to near their summits. At every turn in the path, lovely glimpses of the surrounding scenery are seen through the foliage, and many a charming view is further enhanced by its vivid reflection in an occasional pool in the watercourses crossed in the way. The great rugged sides of Girnar, with its everlasting rocks, kissed by the lingering rays of the rosy sunset, and begirdled with a cloak of varied tinted foliage, now fading into the softest pearly greys, is a picture one loves to linger before. Around us, beside this old patriarch among hills, we have in the south-east the heights of Gadesing, crowned by its ruined fort, on the south-west Dátár-no-dongar, with the hills of Mákhán Kundi, Taktakgiyo, Sazadiári, and Pavandhoda between, and the low pass on the eastern slopes of Girnar known as Súrya-kundki-godi. In the middle of this beautiful valley, then, thus cut off from the outside world, upon a rocky knoll, stands the great mound known as the Boria *Stúpa* or the Lakha Medi (the abode of Lakha). The ground on every side between it and the western edge of the valley is strewn with fragments of bricks, and here and there are small mounds which look much like the remains of little *stúpas*. Directly eastward of the big *stúpa*, and on the eastern edge of the valley, is the small temple of Bor Deví, so called from the Bor trees which surround it.

On our arrival at the *stúpa* we found that a relic casket had been unearthed. The digging that led to its discovery is described in Mr. Campbell's notes attached, from which it would appear that the depth of the casket from the summit of the mound was 39 feet. During the excavation the top of the mound had been cut off to a depth of 22 feet, and a trench 20 feet wide at the top had been driven from the east straight into the centre. The sides and floor of the cutting shew, that the whole *stúpa* was built of close horizontal layers of good brickwork in herring-bone bond, and it is a solid compact mass. The bricks are of the old Buddhist type, measuring 18" × 15" × 3". Whatever the state of the upper portion, which has been cleared away, may have been, the lower part now standing is solid enough to allow a perpendicular cutting to be carried down without fear of the sides falling in.

During the excavation various slabs and fragments of sculptured stone (Junagadh freestone) were met with, most of them having been

found about the vertical axis of the mound. They were numbered as found, but owing to no plans or sections having been plotted as the work progressed, there was some little doubt as to the positions of some few fragments. The two great heavy rail slabs were no doubt placed in the positions in which they were found for the purpose of the better securing the relics from any burrowing thief. The others were probably put in without any special purpose.

Before describing these fragments it will be as well to revert to the relics. See Plate V. On our arrival at the mound on Monday, the 18th February, we entered the trench and found the stone coffer, with its lid upon it, standing on one side (west) of its original bed. As far as could be seen, it had been placed in the vertical axis of the mound, and, from measurements taken by me, and the statement that it was at a depth of 39 feet from the original top, I conclude that it occupied a position in the centre of that axis. On finding the box, Mr. Ardesir had it lifted to one side to see if there was anything beneath it, but he kept its bed undisturbed so that we could see how it was placed. From the discovery until we arrived a day or two had elapsed, during which time the coffer had been left standing in the trench under a guard, but had not been sealed or otherwise made fast. This outer receptacle consists of two blocks of white free stone, one upon the other, the upper serving as a covering to the lower. The block had been placed, so far as I could see by the marking of the bed, with its sides facing the cardinal points. Upon lifting off the upper slab we found a small circular well in the upper side of the lower stone, closed by a thin circular slab which rested upon a shoulder inside round the top of the well. On lifting out this little cover, whose top was flush with the top of the slab, we found inside a small stone pot with lid. The shape of the lower part of this is that of a shallow bowl, while the upper, or lid, was like an inverted saucer with a lip on its underside. This pot was very nearly as big round as the well in which it was placed, and it was with some little difficulty got out. The bowl or the lower part of the pot is perfectly plain, but the top has, by way of ornament six concentric grooved circles. The material out of which it is made is a dull red claystone, and the whole has been turned very neatly upon the lathe. This is evident from the circles, where the tool in its progress round has very slightly chipped or serrated the edge of the circles. A curious thing about this pot, and which will be noticed again presently, is that the lid does not fit the bowl, being too big for it, its lip overlapping and resting on the inner edge of the bowl instead of dropping into it. Within the well, surrounding this pot, was found a small quantity of gritty powder.

In the stone pot was found a little copper pot in two parts like

the last—bowl and lid. Thus far had the pot been opened by Mr Ardesir before our arrival. The copper pot being encrusted with green verdigris was not so easily opened, and the further opening of the vessels was entrusted to me. To open the copper pot, I had to insert the blade of my penknife between the lid and the bowl, and by gentle leverage force the former off. The general shape of the copper pot is that of the stone one, being slightly rounder. But it has an addition of a little drum-like protuberance forming a kind of handle to the lid. When the copper pot was opened a silver pot of the same shape was found within, while underneath it, and between it and the sides of the copper pot, was a dry brittle substance covered with verdigris. This, on close inspection, has the appearance of compressed vegetable matter, bearing the impress of the silver pot on it. It looks as if some green (moist) grass-like vegetable had been put in, and the silver box added and pressed down upon it. Its moisture had greatly corroded the inside of the copper vessel up to a line above the junction of the lid. Beyond this, the interior of the dome of the lid was not corroded, being apparently protected by the intervening silver box, and this part had a purplish metallic sheen which is probably the result of fire when beating out and shaping the lid. The corrosion had eaten a considerable hole in one side of the bottom of the bowl.

The silver box was quite bright. The only difference between this and the copper one being in the shape of the knob on the top which has a narrower waist at its junction with the top of the dome of the lid. This, on being opened, revealed a bright little gold box. Between the two was a small quantity of very light knobbly brown stuff which on close examination and under a low power microscope appeared to have a distinctly fibrous texture. To me it appeared to be a mouldy or fungus vegetable matter.

Great interest and curiosity now centred round the opening of the gold box, and the lid was removed amidst much speculation as to its contents. Its shape differed from the others only in the shape of the knob on the lid which was here conical. In the box we found the relic and a few grains of coaly grit, accompanied by the usual five offerings, in this case comprising an aquamarine (?) bead, a ruby, a sapphire, an emerald, and a small piece of dry twig or white coral with a smaller chip of the same. The relic upon close examination seems to be a small chip of stone that has been under the action of fire. It is a flake about $\frac{2}{3}$ of an inch long by $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch broad, of a dull yellowish drab colour with darker smoky stains. Its surface is cracked all over as if by fire. Under the microscope the surface appears to be covered with fine grains of sand of various hues and dimensions. A lower power shews

the surface as blocks of rock with the rifts or fissures (the cracks) filled with gravel. It is most certainly *not* bone, nor does it appear to be burnt clay, unless it has been burnt into hard stone ware. The gritty substance under the microscope looks like lumps of coal of various sizes, and to the naked eye as a few grains of different sized gunpowder. The bead which is the largest jewel, is in cross section triangular with rounded corners, one side being much longer than the other two, which, themselves, are unequal. The bead, in its length, has thus three faces. The hole has been drilled from both ends, which is evident from the meeting in the centre not being quite true. It is transparent, with a slightly, but decided, green tinge, and Mr. Campbell thinks it an aquamarine. It may be crystal. The ruby, which is ruby-coloured by reflected light, is of the colour of strong tea by transmitted light. It is in the shape of a very flat cone, the diameter of its base being about $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch. The sapphire is a deep blue by reflected, but a lighter blue by transmitted light, while the emerald is light opaque green. These two stones are smaller than the ruby, the emerald being the smallest. Now we come to the last article, which has all the appearance of a piece of dried twig, though perhaps a trifle heavy for such. It is about $\frac{5}{8}$ inch long and nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter. The outside is covered with fine parallel lines or scoring, running with the length of the substance, and on it are one or two eyes where leaves or small branches may have been attached. It is of an uniform grey tint. The fractured ends or sections do not, however, shew any woody texture, but is more solid looking. In the five offerings made to images, and at the consecration of Hindu temples, the coral always forms a fifth with jewels, but then it is generally the red coral. It is not unlikely that this may be a piece of coral too, but of the white kind. The nature of the bead requires a professional opinion to decide. The usual five offerings in Hindu shrines are—a diamond, a ruby, an emerald, a pearl, and a piece of coral.

The relic boxes were carefully examined, but no trace of inscription or of single letters could be found, nor has any coin been discovered. We are thus still without any clue to the age of the stúpa, unless we get it in the fragments of sculptured stones which may yet be excavated. On the 20th the relic boxes and the contents of the small gold box were photographed full size.

The excavation is still being continued, and when we left the mound on the evening of the 19th, a well had been sunk in the brick work to a depth of 8 feet below the centre of the position, where the coffer stood; but without anything more being found.

The sculptured stones that had been found are themselves full of interest, and if the remaining portions of the structure of which these form

part can be discovered, the trouble and expense in getting at them will be amply repaid. The top member of the Tee or triple umbrella is a huge heavy slab one foot two inches thick. The edges round are broken away, but one image mortise remains at one corner, 3 feet 4 inches from the centre. The centre of the slab is pierced with a large round hole, 1 foot $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, to receive the stem of the umbrella. Three-fourths of the entire rim of the great umbrella were found, and they all piece together remarkably well, and give a diameter of 10 feet and a thickness of 1 foot. Four fragments of the four supporting images (one of each) have also been found, and the tenons under their feet correspond with the mortise in the top of the Tee. In the lower edge of the umbrella rim are the corresponding mortises to receive the tops of the images. The underside of the umbrella is slightly hollowed out. The whole was originally in one piece, but as yet the central parts and the remaining fragments of the rim have not been found. Nearly half the collar, however, with portions of the two upper ones, of different thickness, have been excavated. The holes in these decrease in size. Portion of a smaller figure, probably from the second tier, has been recovered. In the top of the big umbrella are four mortises immediately above those below, but near the centre, for the feet of these upper images. In the edge of the umbrella small holes are drilled through half way, between the images and about $\frac{5}{8}$ inch diameter, apparently intended for hangings or the sticks of small flags. There are many other fragments and slabs whose original use cannot as yet be definitely determined, but in addition to these are the fragments of two lengths of rail slab, 8 feet 3 inches by 3 feet $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. These have long tongues at either end to fit into long mortises in some supports not yet found. The surface is carved into uprights with three bands of rail running through them. On the upright struts are incised central circles with a half circle at top and bottom. The length of these slabs is the length of a side of the original polygonal railing round a *stúpa* or structural dagoba.

The question which now requires solution is, whether the triple umbrella was an erection over a previous *stúpa* or over a structural dagoba. That it was never erected over the present *stúpa* is self-evident from the positions in which the fragments were found. If a larger *stúpa* existed on this spot, it is very unlikely that it would have been pulled down and rebuilt. It would have been repaired if necessary or an outer casing added. It is my opinion that a structural dagoba existed probably on this spot *before* the *stúpa*, and the triple umbrella being so top-heavy fell and was smashed as we find it; and in this was enshrined the present relics. Finding how unstable this arrange-

ment was, the Buddhist determined to build the present *stúpa*, and the fragments of the old dagoba, which had to a certain extent become sanctified by its use as a relic receptacle, were buried in the mound. I should thus not be surprised, if the bulk of this original structure be found at the ground level, being thrown in to help to get the required height for the relic coffer.

It has been decided to carry on the excavation to the rock; and I estimate that there are 35 to 40 feet of brick work between the position of the coffer and the foundation. I have advised that a well be continued down through the centre, a sloping approach being made to it from the east along the present cutting. Then, if necessary, the cutting east and west might be carried straight through the mound down to the foundation. If nothing is found, then it will be needless to demolish the mound in the chance of finding anything in the two halves. If, on the contrary, my suppositions are correct, and the remains of some structural dagoba be found scattered through the mound then nothing is left for it but to clear away the whole.

At a point in the mound at about 4 feet from the coffer, and on the same level, was found a handful of broken chips. These were the fragments of a pot of exactly the same material as the stone pot containing the relics, and on piecing some of the fragments around the lip of the cover of the latter they were found to lie evenly to it and to have exactly the same curve. I have already mentioned the little trouble we had in getting the stone-pot out of the well, which was a good deal deeper than it, there being hardly enough room round about it to get the fingers in. The inference I draw from this is, that the original bowl, of which the present lid was its cover, is now represented by these fragments. The accident probably happened thus. After enclosing the copper box within the stone pot, the latter was being let down into the well, when, from the small diameter of the latter the priest's fingers slipped from the bowl to the lid. The bowl fell into the well and got broken while the lid remained in his fingers. The fragments were then taken out and cast aside, and a new bowl obtained which did not quite fit the lid. The immense pressure of the mass of brick work above reduced the fragments to chips as we find them. But the amount of these is quite sufficient to build up a complete bowl as large as the whole one.

It is curious that no heads of images have as yet been found.

I have not been able to revisit the *stúpa* since my first visit, but have been informed that nothing of any consequence was found upon further excavation.

